



2004 Winter Issue

OUTREACH

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Contents

Social Services Information Now Available by Dialing 211	1
IMA Makes District Most Highly Awarded Jurisdiction in Nation	1
Fatherhood Initiative Prepares Fathers to Make a Difference	2
Hypothermia Watch Campaign	2
DHS Radio Talk Show	3
DHS Surpasses Language Barrier to Deliver Services	3
RSA Seeks Help to Prepare Vulnerable Population During Crisis	4
Community Information Fair Attracts 5,000 Residents	5

DHS Extras

The **DHS Fiscal Year 2003 Progress Report** is now available. To receive a copy of the document, call Ms. Anita Barnes at **(202) 671-4425**.

Tune into the DHS radio talk show, **"Inside DHS,"** live on **WOL-1450-AM** every **Monday, 11:00 am** to 12:00 noon.

DC Social Services Information Now Available by Dialing 211

The Department of Human Services (DHS) launched its Dial 211 for social services information and referral campaign in October. The launch began with Mayor Anthony Williams announcing the beginning of 211 dialing in the District, which allows residents to access DHS' **Answers, Please!** social services information and referral call center.

The launch was the result of years of effort by DHS, the Public Service Commission, Verizon, and the DC Office of the People's Counsel. Now, residents can simply dial 211 to access Community Resource Advisors who can connect them to hundreds of social services in the District.

"We have citizens who are physically abused, don't have access to healthcare, are on fixed incomes and need help, or are stressed out and need mental health services; now there is a one-stop number for all of these services," Mayor Williams said. "We are promoting 211 as the number one access point for social services in the District." *Continues on page 5*



From left: Representatives from DC Water and Sewer Authority, Pepco, Washington Gas, Mayor Anthony A. Williams, DHS Director Yvonne Gilchrist, Deputy Mayor Neil Albert, and representatives from the DC Public Service Commission, Verizon and DC Office of the People's Counsel.

Free DHS 211 refrigerator magnets available now. Call (202) 671-4425

IMA Makes District Most Highly Awarded Jurisdiction in the Nation

The US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the US Department of Agriculture (DOA) clearly consider Washington, DC's DHS **Income Maintenance Administration (IMA)** one of the very best in the country. HHS and DOA recently provided a combination of more than \$27 million in bonus awards to IMA for its performance in reducing out-of-wedlock births, helping welfare recipients succeed in the workplace, providing access to childcare subsidies, conducting outstanding administration of the Food Stamp program, and having one of the nation's best participant access rates.

Over the past five years, IMA won 11 out of 12 bonus awards from the federal government and, in doing so, earned for the District of Columbia an additional \$142 million to assist low-income residents. As a result, the District remains the most highly awarded jurisdiction in the nation for effective administration of its social welfare programs.

www.dhs.dc.gov

Please direct your comments about the DHS newsletter to **Outreach!**



DC Fatherhood Initiative Helps Prepare Fathers to Make A Difference

The DC Fatherhood Initiative was created by DHS and officially established by Mayor Williams in May 2002 to help unemployed and low-income fathers overcome barriers to developing and maintaining responsible involvement in their children's lives. Since its inception, the DC Fatherhood Initiative has helped fathers acquire critical life skills, basic education and employment training, job placement, addiction recovery assistance, and self-esteem and effective parenting training. In fiscal year 2004, the Initiative collectively helped 852 males improve their lives and become responsible fathers to their children. Now in its second year, the Initiative also helps fathers who are ex-offenders reconnect with their children.

Through the coordinated efforts of seven community-based organizations in the District of Columbia and DHS funding, the DC Fatherhood Initiative provides wrap-around services for unprepared or unstable fathers, ages 14 and up, who need to dramatically increase their ability to provide emotional and financial support to their children. The community-based organizations, located throughout

the District, do community outreach to connect with fathers needing assistance.

"Social services were once reserved only for women with children with no thought given to the problems that keep many fathers from being responsibly involved in their children's lives," said DHS Director Yvonne Gilchrist. "Fathers matter and their involvement is vital, especially in low-income families.

"The community-based organizations to whom we have provided grants are working with fathers to remove barriers to positive male involvement, to reduce fatherless-ness, and unplanned births."

DHS provided a total of \$1.3 million to fund the DC Fatherhood Initiative in fiscal year 2004. The funds were provided in the form of competitive grants managed by the DHS Office of Grants Management, and will be renewed for fiscal year 2005.

For more information about the DC Fatherhood Initiative, contact David Ross at **(202) 671-4389**. *Continues on page 4*



Graduates of the Hope Foundation's program for fathers proudly show their certificates.

DHS Hypothermia Watch Campaign Saves the Lives of the Homeless

Mayor Appeals to District Residents to Use Hypothermia Hotline



DHS launched its Hypothermia Watch Partner Campaign with Mayor Williams appealing for public support at his November 10th press conference. Mayor Williams announced the agency's campaign to save the lives of the homeless during the winter hypothermia season, which began November 1, 2004, and ends March 31, 2005. He also asked the media and District residents to become Hypothermia Watch Partners by calling the Hypothermia Hotline Number at **1 800 535-7252** to report the location of homeless people who are outdoors in freezing weather.

"I am urging all who live, work, or are visiting the District to take action when you see a homeless person on the street sitting, laying, or sleeping in freezing weather. Call the Hypothermia Hotline at **1 800 535-7252** to report the location of homeless people to help the city save their lives," said Mayor Williams. "Vans will be dispatched to take homeless people to warm shelters.

The Hypothermia Watch Partner Campaign encourages the public to help save homeless people from dying from winter exposure. Hypothermia is a life-threatening condition that occurs when the temperature and wind chill factor falls below 32 degrees Fahrenheit, and body temperature falls below 95 degrees due to exposure. The campaign targets citizens living and working in the District to help prevent hypothermia deaths among the city's homeless by calling the Hypothermia Hotline, **1 800 535-7252**, to report the homeless person's location. *Continues on page 5*

DHS Launches Talk Radio Program

Do you want to know about DHS programs? Do you have questions about how DHS helps families, the homeless, refugees, and others? Then every Monday at 11:00 am, turn your radio dial to WOL (1450 AM) and listen to "Inside DHS," a live, talk show dedicated to informing District residents about DHS programs and services. "Inside DHS" covers a different program or initiative within DHS each week. The call-in show features such topics as "Dial 211 for social services information," "Early Childhood Development," "Teenage Pregnancy Prevention," "Eating Nutritious Meals on a Food Stamp Budget," "Emergency Preparedness for Residents with Special Needs," "Domestic Violence Prevention," "How to Become a Certified Childcare and Residential Services Provider," "Early Intervention and Healthy Childcare," and "Medicaid Waiver Eligibility."

"Inside DHS not only informs DC residents about the programs we offer, but lets them hear from the people who administer these programs," said Debra Daniels chief of the Office of Communications and Public Affairs. Daniels will host most of the programs.



Communications Chief Debra Daniels prepares for the first Inside DHS radio broadcast on October 25, 2004.

"Listeners have the opportunity to call into the show and have their questions answered by leading experts within DHS and other DC government agencies."

"Inside DHS" began October 25, and is scheduled to run through March 14, 2005.



Earnest Taylor, manager, DHS' 211 Answers, Please! appears as a guest on Inside DHS radio talk show.

DHS Surpasses Language Barrier to Deliver Services

Washington, DC's, ethnic communities have swelled significantly in the past decade. With a racial makeup that includes 8% Latino, 2.66% Asian, 0.30% Native American, and 0.06% Pacific Islander residents, DHS must ensure that language barriers don't keep residents from accessing DHS programs and services.

To help bridge the language gap, the DHS Language Access Plan (LAP) was established and includes data collection, translation and interpretation, and diversifying workforce and cultural competence training components. When DHS program information is translated into such languages as Amharic, Chinese, Spanish and Vietnamese, DHS Administrations can serve the city's diverse communities better, officials say.

"Through funding, workshops, information fairs and direct dialogue with community members and stakeholders, DHS makes LAP a necessary and powerful channel for public-private partnerships and a mechanism to ensure that Limited English Proficiency (LEP) communities have equal access to government programs and services," said Jate Pan, Language Access coordinator.

LAP is a result of the DC Language Access Act signed into law on April 21, 2004. The law regulates that the Office of Human Rights (OHR) establish, lead and monitor the implementation of the act. To support the OHR, the DHS Language Access Coordinator works closely with OHR and its staff to share experiences and ideas in developing and implementing the plan, and provides assistance in outreach to LEP communities.

"DHS has established a language access planning team, a structured implementation approach, and strong community connections to carry out the LAP goals, which I think have made us an example to be shared with other government agencies," Pan said. *Continues on page 5*

RSA Seeks Help to Prepare City's Most Vulnerable Population During Crisis



Secretary of US Department of Homeland Security, Tom Ridge

Are the District's most vulnerable residents prepared in the event of a citywide emergency? The Rehabilitation Services Administration's (RSA) Mayor's Committee on People with Disabilities sought answers to that question at the first national "Conference on Emergency Preparedness for People with Disabilities" in September.

In a recent survey by the National Organization on Disabilities (NOD), individuals with disabilities are less prepared than the general population in an emergency situation. RSA, which has a consumer base of more than 10,000 residents with disabilities, attended the three-day conference to get pointers from speakers from such agencies as NOD, the American Red Cross, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and the Department of Homeland Security.

"This conference was a very good beginning," said Steve Gorman, chair of the Mayor's Committee on Persons with Disabilities. "It's recognized that people with disabilities are the most vulnerable in anticipated emergencies (like a storm) and in

unanticipated emergencies (like a terrorist attack). The first step is to reach out to this community as an equal partner in the planning process."

Conference keynote speaker, Homeland Security's Tom Ridge stressed the need for city agencies to include people with disabilities—or the parents of children with disabilities—in their planning and response to emergency situations. Cities should also develop a voluntary, confidential database so first responders will know where to go to assist people with special needs. It was also noted that public establishments should have signage and other aides to help people with disabilities in the event of an evacuation.

The US Department of Justice is now developing a checklist of essential items that all shelters should have on hand for occupants with disabilities. For more information, NOD's publication: *Emergency Preparedness Initiative Guide for Emergency Managers, Planners & Responders*, a first emergency preparedness guide, which highlights key disability concerns for officials and experts responsible for emergency planning in their communities, is now available online at the [NOD website](#)

DC Fatherhood Initiative Helps Prepare Fathers to Make A Difference *Continued from page 2*

DC Fatherhood Initiative Community-based Organizations

Arch Training Center, Inc.
2309 Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue, SE
(202) 678-8146

Reaching Inside for Self Esteem
3219 Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue, SE
(202) 561-3440

Greater Washington Urban League
3501 14th Street, NW
(202) 265-8200

United Planning Organization
301 Rhode Island Avenue, NW
(202) 238-4683

Reintegrating Alternatives Personal Program
2465 Alabama Avenue, SE
(202) 678-6038

Healthy Families Thriving Communities
Collaborative Council
1426 U Street, NW
(202) 299-0900

Community Information Fairs Attract 5,000 Residents

The "Bet You Didn't Know" Community Information Fairs held from August to October 2004, in four District neighborhood areas, attracted and provided government program information to 5,000 residents. Sponsored by DC Human Services Cluster Agencies and coordinated by the DHS Office of Community Outreach, the Fairs were held in the Edgewood Terrace, Benning Terrace, River Terrace, and Adams Morgan neighborhoods. Instrumental in DHS' coordination of the Community Information Fairs, DHS Director Yvonne Gilchrist emphasized the need to bring government programs directly to the residents in their neighborhoods.



Volunteers and residents at the Benning Terrace "Bet You Didn't Know" Community Information Fair.

DC Social Services Information Now Available by Dialing 211

Continued from page 1

Answers, Please! is staffed 24-hours a day, seven days a week by highly trained Community Resource Advisors who take time to listen to people and find out what help they need.

In 2000, the Federal Communications Commission designated 211 as the national abbreviated dialing code for free access to health and human services information and referral. Last year, members of the Senate and the House introduced legislation to expand 211 access nationally and to provide federal funding to states. Today, more than 100 user-friendly 211 systems are in place throughout the United States.

DHS Hypothermia Watch Campaign

Continued from page 2

Before the launch of 211, residents had to dial (202) 463-6211 to access *Answers, Please!* Since its inception in 1999, DHS' *Answers, Please!* handled nearly 200,000 calls for social service information and referrals.

The DHS Family Services Administration (FSA), which funds and oversees the city's services for the homeless, contracts with the Community Partnership for the Prevention of Homelessness to manage shelters for the homeless and works in partnership with other government agencies, private organizations, and advocates to save the lives of homeless people during the winter. When people call the Hypothermia Hotline, a van is dispatched from the United Planning Organization (UPO) to the reported location to pick up homeless people and take them to shelters. UPO drivers also carry and distribute blankets, warm beverages, and articles of warm clothing to homeless persons.

DHS provides 1,703 emergency shelter beds for men, women, and families during the 2004-2005 hypothermia season, and space for a total of 17,000 homeless people in the District annually.

DHS urges you to become a District of Columbia Hypothermia Watch Partner. Be mindful of homeless people on DC streets during freezing weather and call the Hypothermia Hotline at **1 800 535-7252** to help save lives.

DHS Surpasses Language Barrier to Deliver Services

Continued from page 3

In the next 12 months, LAP plans to:

- Expand its participating agencies to include other DHS programs such as the Fatherhood Initiative, Neighborhood Services, 211 *Answers, Please!* and the Strong Families Program;
- Expand its management support offices so it can provide imperative support for all participating agencies and/or programs; and,
- Ensure that all DHS staff understand and appreciate the importance of implementing the Language Access Act and its impact toward Limited English Proficiency and at-large communities.

"Training and workshops are helping us to communicate the importance of this Act to DHS employees," said Pan. "DHS employees understand the importance of transcending language barriers and its link to reaching out to those families and individuals most in need."